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Security Council

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Friday, 26 September 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Yoda	(Burkina Faso)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Ms. Yade
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Letter dated 4 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/594)

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08-52321 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Letter dated 4 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/594)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Alexander Stubb, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Alexander Stubb and invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to a letter dated 4 September 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, addressed to the President of the Security Council and contained in document S/2008/594.

At this meeting the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Alexander Stubb, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Stubb: I am very glad to be here today. I shall be speaking in my capacity as Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and if I may, I will deal with three main points today.

To begin with, if I were to give a thesis for my briefing today it would be that, to put it very simply, the United Nations and the OSCE are partners in destiny. I would like to highlight two ways in which that the United Nations and the OSCE have cooperated during the Finnish chairmanship of the OSCE.

First, we want to promote the implementation of all United Nations principles, conventions and other instruments established at the global level. So, in may ways one could perhaps argue that the OSCE is in the business of trying to help support all of those principles that have been underlined here in the United Nations.

The second way in which I see us cooperating is that the OSCE early warning, crisis management and post-conflict activities are crucial components of the United Nations-based international order. So, in many ways you could say that the United Nations and the OSCE are both in the business of preventing and resolving conflicts. Thus, we live in a kind of symbiosis, and if one was to simplify, and I say that as a European — the United Nations has a global reach with its 192 Members, while the European Union has a very regional reach with its 27 members — the OSCE fits quite comfortably between those two organizations with its 56 members, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Today, I shall deal with three challenges that I believe the OSCE and the United Nations share, and those three challenges are, of course, regional. The first is Georgia, the second Kosovo and the third Afghanistan. Having dealt with those three issues briefly, I will draw on two lessons that I think we can learn from the recent crisis. So, I will start off with Georgia.

In my capacity as the Chairman of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, I would never have thought that the chairmanship would have become as exciting at the end of the day as it has. Of course, that had to do with the events that took place at the beginning of August in Georgia.

What was our aim as Chair? In many ways it was to do three things: first of all, to broker a ceasefire, and I think we succeeded in that fairly fast, within five days. Here, I would like to pay tribute to the work done by French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner and French President Nicolas Sarkozy in their capacities as Chairmen of the European Union. I would also like to pay tribute to all those parties engaged in trying to broker that ceasefire, including President Medvedev, Prime Minister Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov and

President Saakashvili. It was a joint effort, we did it in five days and that was the key aim.

The second aim of the OSCE has been to supervise the withdrawal of the troops. Here, I think we are, so as to say, getting there with what I would call the Sarkozy II plan, with an aim of having the troops withdrawn by 10 October.

The third aim has been to give an international presence to the conflict and the crisis, and I think the OSCE had an instrumental role in that, because we were the only organization that had the infrastructure to put military monitors on the ground and, after negotiations, we were able to get 20 monitors in to areas adjacent to South Ossetia. I think the role has been crucial in monitoring the ceasefire and we have done that from the beginning. There are two negotiations that are still ongoing on that particular subject of the military monitors. One is on an additional 80, who would be sent to areas adjacent to South Ossetia. I am cautiously hopeful that with the constructive participation of all members of the OSCE, we can get them in.

The other one is about the eight military monitors who had an OSCE mandate in Tskhinvali in South Ossetia. There, things have not gone as planned, but let me stress that I think that we will be able to start within the next few days if the security of the monitors can be guaranteed on missions going from Georgia to Tskhinvali. I would really like to pay tribute to the efforts of my colleague, Sergey Lavrov, in trying to help the eight monitors enter the region, so we can get what one could call objective information. So, I am cautiously hopeful on both of those accounts, on the 80 and on the eight for South Ossetia.

I have made two visits to Georgia, to Tbilisi, together with Foreign Minister Kouchner, first just when the war began. That was the ceasefire part. Then, the second visit took place a few days afterwards, when I went to see and observe how the ceasefire was being implemented.

Another important step from the European Union side has also taken place, which is that in the EU we have decided to put in an additional 200 monitors. So, to sum up, on Georgia and on what is going on right now, we will continue our efforts in military monitoring.

Now, where do I see the United Nations as having a role in the package of stabilizing Georgia? I think the role of the United Nations is in long-term stability, and I am convinced that the Security Council should have a key role, as in all questions concerning international peace and stability. What I have proposed is the formation of an international platform made up of three key organizations — the United Nations, the EU and the OSCE — as well as the stakeholders in the conflict. That platform should be convened as soon as possible. I believe a good starting point is 15 October, when an international conference is scheduled to be held in Geneva. I am also looking forward to cooperating with the future Chairs of the OSCE — Greece, Kazakhstan and Lithuania — as well as other OSCE partners.

That concludes what I wanted to say on the crisis in Georgia. I think we are moving in the right direction, but all of us need to continue in international engagement.

The second issue I wanted to raise is Kosovo, which I shall do very briefly. All the OSCE-participating States have supported continued OSCE engagement in Kosovo. We have good cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE in the area. Under resolution 1244 (1999), the OSCE is an essential pillar of United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We have our largest operation there, with 800 mission members on the ground throughout all of Kosovo's municipalities, and I think that helps build strong local institutions. We will continue those efforts and hope that the transition from UNMIK to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) will be less painful than it has been so far.

The final substantive issue I wanted to deal with is Afghanistan. I will do that very briefly as well. The importance of effective international action holds true in several parts of the OSCE area, especially Afghanistan. Afghanistan is an OSCE partner for cooperation and shares common borders with three of our participating States. Many more are engaged inside the country in international frameworks such as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). So clearly the OSCE has a strategic interest in the stabilization of the country.

At the last ministerial meeting, in Madrid last November, OSCE Foreign Ministers pledged to

intensify OSCE engagement with Afghanistan. I hope that that will continue, not least in the areas related to policing and the fight against drug trafficking.

We will continue our efforts in Afghanistan. The United Nations and the OSCE both have important roles. The United Nations is the main coordinator of international involvement in Afghanistan, and I am sure we can count on its support. All OSCE initiatives will be conducted in full cooperation with UNAMA and other entities, because it is in all of our interests to have a more stable situation on the ground in Afghanistan.

I will conclude with some final thoughts or lessons that I, in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, have drawn from recent events.

First of all, I think that recent events have highlighted the fragility of the rules-based international order that the United Nations, with the support of the OSCE, strives to build. In that sense, the crisis in Georgia has underlined the critical importance of cooperation between the two organizations.

I draw two lessons from this. First, there really is no such thing as a frozen conflict. I think it is time to banish that term from the political lexicon and act quickly to settle any outstanding conflicts in our region. Let us forget all the talk about frozen conflicts and try instead to resolve them.

The second lesson I draw is that we should redirect the work of our international security structures in the spirit of effective multilateralism so that they provide genuine security and stability to member countries and their inhabitants. I think that both the OSCE and the United Nations should be a part of such long-term efforts. On the part of the OSCE, I would argue that we need to start those efforts at the Helsinki ministerial meeting in December.

In summary, we are partners in destiny. I think there are a few key ways in which we can cooperate. We should focus a lot on Georgia, Kosovo and Afghanistan and the lessons that we can draw from all this. There should be no more frozen conflicts, and let us focus on multilateral efforts.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Stubb for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make comments or ask questions in response to the briefing we have just heard.

I invite the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights of France, Her Excellency Ms. Rama Yade to take the floor.

Ms. Yade (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to welcome the presence of the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Stubb, and to thank him for his briefing. The priorities that he has defined are in keeping with the challenges we face, and we share them in full.

The European Union (EU) is tied to the OSCE, the only organization that brings together all the States from Vancouver to Vladivostok and is equipped with a broad mandate. It has contributed to the strengthening of international stability and security by establishing a platform of common values. That is why France and its EU partners believe it is imperative to preserve the conditions that ensure the effectiveness of OSCE actions — not only because the EU currently represents almost half of the OSCE's membership and provides three quarters of its budget, but above all because the EU and the OSCE are deeply complementary. They share the same values and the same principles, but they do not yet work together closely enough. One of the objectives of the French presidency of the EU is precisely to further strengthen this complementary relationship. The presence at this table of several ministers representing European States that are members of the OSCE demonstrates that that priority is widely shared within the EU.

The EU and the OSCE are cooperating closely to resolve the crisis in Georgia. The joint visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France and his Finnish counterpart on 10 August demonstrated this cooperation. On the ground, the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) will of course be working closely together. The OSCE also continues to play a very positive role in Kosovo, which deserves support. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo fulfils an important role in guaranteeing a democratic and multi-ethnic future for Kosovo, in particular in the preservation of minority rights. The stability of the Balkans must be a shared goal for the EU and OSCE.

Finally, Central Asia is the region where the activities of the OSCE have been most developed in recent years. The EU, by adopting a strategy for Central Asia, is also in the process of becoming a full actor in the region. During our presidency of the EU and in close coordination with the OSCE, we shall focus our efforts on security issues in Central Asia. Those issues were addressed in Paris on 18 September at the first EU-Central Asia Forum addressing security issues and will be considered at the conference of the EU, the OSCE and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on integrated border management and the fight against narcotics in Central Asia.

It is in its comprehensive vision of security and cooperation that the OSCE finds the fullest expression of its value. It was founded on the belief that security goes hand in hand with the promotion of human rights and democracy. In that regard, I welcome the essential role played by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in providing election monitoring in the OSCE region, and I encourage all States Members to welcome those missions during major elections.

This institution is essential for our organization. The strength of the OSCE lies in its autonomy, which must be preserved. France will pay attention to promoting its irreplaceable expertise and to its exemplary role in election monitoring.

The French presidency of the EU coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This symbolic anniversary is an opportunity to energetically recall the universality of those values and principles. I welcome the fact that the sixtieth anniversary will also be celebrated by the OSCE, under the presidency of Finland.

Finally, the OSCE must continue to work in close coordination with other international and regional organizations. In that regard, the presence of the Finnish chairmanship at the Security Council is a good example of the vital cooperation between the European Union and the OSCE.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I should also like to thank Minister Stubb for the briefing he has given us, as the Chairman-in-Office, on the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I would also like to assure him of Belgium's full support for his efforts to promote the agenda of the OSCE.

As a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE continues to be an important regional stakeholder. With its unique concept of security — which includes the political, military, economic, environmental and human dimensions — and its presence in the field, the OSCE is continuing to play a concrete stabilizing role in the region.

It is of course impossible not to refer to the situation in Georgia. Belgium would like to thank the Chairman-in-Office and the entire OSCE for their efforts to pacify the situation. In that connection, I would like to refer in particular to the 19 August agreement to deploy 100 additional observers to areas adjacent to South Ossetia, in addition to the eight observers in South Ossetia, 20 of whom were immediately sent to Georgia.

In that regard, Belgium very much regrets that it was not possible to achieve an agreement among participating States on the modalities for the deployment of the additional OSCE observers. That has prevented the dispatching of the 80 remaining additional observers at this stage, as initially planned.

Furthermore, Belgium believes that the OSCE, together with other stakeholders, such as the European Union and the United Nations, will have an important role to play in the upcoming discussions to be held in Geneva.

Belgium would like to thank the Chairman-in-Office for his briefing. We wish him every success for the ministerial meeting to be held in Helsinki. I assure him of Belgium's full support.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I would very much like to thank the Chairman-in-Office for his briefing. I should also like to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity today discuss the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its partnership with the United Nations.

What the Chairman-in-Office said about partnership between the United Nations and the OSCE tracks very well with our thinking. I would also like to echo what was said on behalf of the French presidency of the European Union (EU) about the overall relationship between the United Nations, the OSCE

and those of us who have the honour to be members of all three organizations.

I would like to start, if I may, with something that the Minister did not touch on in detail, but which we think is important — OSCE support for the implementation of United Nations principles in tackling a number of serious horizontal issues. I am referring to such issues as counter-terrorism, small arms and light weapons and trafficking in human beings. I would also like to welcome Minister Stubb's work to re-energize the OSCE's efforts in the area of conflict resolution and crisis management, as well as his desire for closer cooperation with the United Nations.

Obviously, I think, many people are interested at the moment in the issue of Georgia, as the Chairman-in-Office himself said. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his efforts throughout, including his role in helping to broker the six-point plan. We look forward to closer United Nations-OSCE cooperation on this issue and on humanitarian tasks, as well as in playing a role in support of the EU special representative for Georgia. We welcome the OSCE's being fully involved in the preparations for the Geneva conference.

We are grateful to the Chairman-in-Office for his update on the negotiations on the OSCE military monitors. We share the disappointment of Belgium about some of the difficulties that those negotiations have encountered due to the objections of one Member State. However, what the Chairman-in-Office went on to say about the prospects for a positive result, building on his own contacts with Foreign Minister Lavrov, was very encouraging.

We look forward to seeing genuine and sufficient access for the OSCE military monitors, in sufficient numbers. As we said, the OSCE is uniquely placed to play that role, with its European and wider membership. It is important that we have mechanisms to monitor withdrawals. In order to monitor withdrawals properly, of course, proper access to South Ossetia is essential. I would also like to take this opportunity to call for the proper protection of the OSCE monitors who are on the ground, as well as to ask all parties to ensure that they have adequate protection to do the job that has been assigned to them.

I should now like to turn to Kosovo, on which a number of speakers have touched. The OSCE is playing an important role in helping to develop a multi-ethnic and tolerant society in Kosovo. It has been there since the inception of resolution 1244 (1999) and has played a very encouraging role. Its continuing engagement, in particular in ensuring the protection of minorities and respect for human rights, is of critical importance. It has a very valuable asset in its extensive field presence, in particular as the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo downsizes. We hope that OSCE engagement can reinforce the efforts of other international actors on the ground, above all those of the European Union.

Turning to Afghanistan, we strongly support OSCE engagement on that country's northern border, including inside Afghanistan. That is helping to stabilize the country. The OSCE has a role to play in helping Afghanistan to secure its borders with the Central Asian States, to improve policing and to combat drug trafficking. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chairmanship of the OSCE for the efforts it has made in the cross-border area, as well as to say that we support the package of project proposals that is currently on the table in Vienna. We also agree that OSCE engagement must be fully coordinated with the United Nations, which is the principal coordinator of international involvement in Afghanistan.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): I, too, would like to welcome the Chairman-in-Office and thank him for his comprehensive overview of the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) under Finland's leadership. The Chair's presentation touched on the OSCE's multifaceted approach to security, which includes the political and military aspects as well as the economic, environmental and human dimensions. We commend the OSCE's efforts to further the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and we strongly support the Chair's statement on the importance of OSCE-United Nations cooperation.

We strongly commend the OSCE's work in Georgia and appreciate the organization's ongoing efforts to contribute to a comprehensive solution to the conflict. I want to commend Foreign Minister Stubb personally for the leadership he has demonstrated throughout the Georgia crisis. The OSCE responded quickly to the crisis, sending an additional 20 military monitoring officers to Georgia. We regret that the Russian Federation has blocked the OSCE monitors'

access to South Ossetia. Furthermore, Russia's position regarding the monitors' area of responsibility is now holding up the deployment of an additional 80 monitors. International monitors must have access throughout all of Georgia — the OSCE in South Ossetia and the United Nations in Abkhazia — to verify the implementation of the 12 August ceasefire agreement and to shed light on human rights and humanitarian concerns.

Turning to Kosovo, this year has been one of transformation. Kosovo institutions that were built by the Kosovars with the assistance of the OSCE and the United Nations have become fully functional, and the Kosovo people have rightly taken control of them. Since independence, Kosovo has adopted a new constitution, implementing legislation that enshrines the rights of minorities. The OSCE mission in Kosovo has played an important role in reaching out to minorities, and we look forward to continued OSCE engagement there.

Regarding Afghanistan, we are very pleased to hear that concrete projects related to policing and to the fight against drug trafficking will be under way by the end of the year.

The OSCE also plays a critical role in promoting democracy and reform through election observation. The OSCE Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has set the gold standard for election observation methodology. Its strong credentials and expertise in that area are respected worldwide. The OSCE will observe presidential elections in the United States in November, and we welcome that effort. An autonomous elections watchdog can contribute overall to strengthening democratic institutions in countries in transition and in established democracies.

I want to assure Mr. Stubb of the full support of the United States in his efforts.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): Allow me first of all to congratulate Foreign Minister Stubb on his presentation and on his outstanding chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) over the past year. Many have been the results he has achieved thus far, and we wish him continued success in his mandate.

Italy is strongly committed to the OSCE and supports the priorities of the Finnish chairmanship and Mr. Stubb's efforts to revitalize the organization, which remains an important and much-needed actor in promoting regional stability, security and cooperation.

My Government upholds the cooperation between the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, and regional and subregional organizations in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. Regional organizations must reinforce and complement United Nations efforts through an active role in maintaining international peace and security in areas such as crisis management, peacekeeping operations and counter-terrorism. We believe that the OSCE has established, in that respect, a successful record over the years.

The OSCE, together with the European Union, has played a crucial role since the outbreak of the crisis in Georgia and will continue to be instrumental in the implementation of the 12 August and 8 September agreements, as well as with regard to the Geneva conference to be held in mid-October.

Italy welcomes the continued presence of the OSCE in Kosovo, where it contributes, in close cooperation with all international actors, to the protection of human rights, particularly minority rights, and plays an important role in ensuring regional stability and security.

We also expect the OSCE to follow up on the ministerial decision concerning its engagement in Afghanistan with concrete projects and activities, as its contribution to the ongoing international efforts.

In conclusion, my country believes that the meeting of the Ministerial Council in December will be an opportunity as timely as ever to continue to pursue a constructive and open dialogue on all of the outstanding issues and to highlight the work of the OSCE and strengthen the confidence of Member States in its role in the European security architecture.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): As other delegations have done, I would like to thank the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Foreign Minister Stubb, for his briefing today, and also for all the skill and effort he has put into chairing that organization. We note the complementarity of the OSCE mandate with that of the United Nations and the partnership that has been developed. We also note with pleasure the revitalization of the organization under the Finnish chairmanship.

Three regional crises have been mentioned today, and we commend the OSCE for its engagement in Georgia, Kosovo and Afghanistan. We particularly note the efforts dedicated to and the results achieved in the OSCE engagement in Georgia.

The Chairman-in-Office was rather modest in enumerating the achievements thus far. We know that there are results that the OSCE has achieved in the context of the Forum for Security Cooperation and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, particularly in Kosovo, with respect to minority rights — and not only in the monitoring of elections but also, as was mentioned by the Italian delegation, in the field of the fight against terrorism.

We were particularly glad to hear the approach to the "frozen conflicts" today. We think it is a good way to solve the problems that exist and not sweep them under the carpet.

Finally, I would like to extend our best wishes for the upcoming ministerial meeting in December in Helsinki and pledge the full and continued cooperation of my country with the efforts of the OSCE.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Stubb, for his statement and for his activities as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the overall development and improvement of cooperation of the United Nations and its Security Council with regional and subregional mechanisms, which harmoniously complement each other on the solid basis of the United Nations Charter, in particular Chapter VIII, truly taking into account the comparative advantages that they each possess. Of course, what is crucial here is a clear division of labour and full respect for the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, which will make it possible to increase the capacity of the international community to resolve crises. We note with satisfaction that, as a regional mechanism, the OSCE has established close and fruitful cooperation with the United Nations in a number of key areas, primarily those related to security and the settlement of regional conflicts.

The OSCE is to play an important role in settling the crisis that broke out in August in the Caucasus. We hope that the OSCE observers will effectively and strictly carry out their mandate and cooperate with the European Union observers, who, according to the Medvedev-Sarkozy document of 8 September, must be deployed in the security zone near the South Ossetia area, by 1 October 2008.

We share the view of those who have said they regret that the Permanent Council of the OSCE was unable to take a decision about the deployment of the additional 80 OSCE monitors. That happened because the United States of America and certain other members of the Permanent Council of the OSCE did not fulfil the Medvedev-Sarkozy document of 8 September, but distorted some of its provisions.

For its part, the Russian Federation will do everything it can to support the activities of the OSCE monitors.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alexander Stubb to respond to comments made.

Mr. Stubb: I thank France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States, Italy, Croatia and the Russian Federation for their comments and observations and for their support for the work of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

I did not want to make my original intervention into a Christmas tree, and that is why I limited myself to a quite strict interpretation of what the OSCE is doing at this moment. From the comments I received, perhaps I would draw the conclusion that there is still strong support to try to put a total of 100 observers into Southern Ossetia, or areas adjacent to Southern Ossetia, so we will continue our efforts in that line. There was also strong support for the general work that the OSCE does.

May I summarize. I was left with impressions on two accounts. First, what are the key regions for the OSCE? I would say the Western Balkans. We will continue the efforts there, as the representative of Croatia, among others, underlined. Secondly, it is the Caucasus, by which I mean not only Georgia, but also, of course, the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Moldova, in terms of Transdniestra. Finally, there is Central Asia, which I

did not mention in my intervention. In my capacity as Chair I did make a grand tour of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan during the summer, and it left me with the certain impression that the OSCE has a very important task to do there.

So what are the roles in the three regions? In the Western Balkans it is institution-building. In the Caucasus it is conflict management and post-conflict management, and in Central Asia it is democratic consolidation. Of course we will continue with the rest of the work in border management, human rights, elections, et cetera.

I am looking forward to the Helsinki Ministerial Meeting on 4 and 5 December 2008, because for me, as OSCE Chair, I think that will be a time for us to take stock of what has happened in the past few months and perhaps also come out with an ambitious, short, political declaration on the future of the organization.

I greatly appreciate all the comments received from the Security Council. I have taken note and stock of them and will take them with me and will continue the reflection in our preparations for the Helsinki Ministerial Meeting in December.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Stubb for the clarifications he has provided.

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.